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ABSTRACT

A guide to obtaining English as a second language teaching jobs in international and American schools overseas contains information on the kinds of jobs available, provides a timeline calendar for job-seeking, and lists sources of further information. The nature of the international school, its characteristics and personnel practices, accreditation, employment opportunities, desired teacher qualifications, and recruitment practices are discussed. Addresses are given for federal agencies with overseas schools, private organizations that hire or place teachers extensively overseas, education departments in American territories and possessions, international corporate employment programs, and multinational programs with possible employment opportunities. The job search timeline chronicles a year's preparation for overseas employment, beginning with resume updating and initial contacts and continuing with school selection, application, interviewing, follow-up, and obtaining appropriate papers for work overseas. Questions to ask when applying and interviewing are also suggested. (MSE)

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Donna M. Hurst

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How to Obtain International Employment in ESL, K-12 by Donna M. Hurst

The opportunities for teaching in and coordinating English as a Second or Foreign Language programs in grades K-12 exist in international and American schools in more than 300 countries throughout the world. Both natives and other country nationals work side by side with American children and must be able to perform successfully within the framework of an American curriculum and regular instructional program. Thus, these schools require teachers and program coordinators to develop effective ESL / EFL programs; individuals who possess both the academic training and experience gained here in public / private school settings.

Job seekers in K-12 education are coming to realize that good, full-time teaching positions in ESL / EFL, for a variety of reasons, are challenging to obtain in the United States. Many are considering international living and employment as an exciting alternative. International educators can earn good salaries, live well, travel extensively, and benefit from the rewards of living and working in another culture.

In the following paper I will present updated and comprehensive information on obtaining overseas jobs, grades K-12 in ESL / EFL education. A **TIMELINE CALENDAR** will also be described, which suggests steps to follow on a month-to-month basis related to the job search.

The Nature of the International School

International schools can be found in almost every county in the world. Some are controlled by groups of parents, others by government agencies and religious orders, still others are privately owned. Many are old and boast of long-established reputations. Others are newly-organized in response to current political or economic circumstances. All pride themselves in maintaining overall excellence in education.

Although salaries tend vary from school to school (many times due to the school's location), there are essentially four factors in common among all international schools; 1) they are international, 2) they are independent of any state system of schools, 3) English is the basic language of instruction, and 4) a significant number of replacements are hired each year.

There exist a number of other attractive features about the international school. Any salary earned up to \$80,000 per year is tax-free from U.S. taxes. (The amount of local taxes paid varies from country to country and should be determined prior to the signing of the contract.) Most schools are accredited, which not only ensures good quality education, but also allows teachers to return to employment stateside and have their experience recognized.

Most need qualified ESL personnel due to significant numbers of natives and other nationals in attendance. Most international schools recognize between five and eight years previous teaching experience, sometimes more. In terms of benefits, in almost all cases round-trip travel is paid by the school. Other benefits may include shipping costs, housing subsidies, and free education for children of employees.

Childless teaching couples do tend to receive first preference due to the fact that they tend to be less of an overall risk, in addition to providing more ease in the housing search. However, all statuses are considered.

Qualifications

The minimum qualification for all accredited international schools is a B.A. / B.S. degree and valid certification in at least one subject area. Many schools require a degree, certification and two years experience; others, a degree, certification, two years experience, married status with the spouse qualified to teach.

Types of International Schools

The U.S. Department of State assists the *Overseas American-Sponsored Elementary and Secondary Schools (Office of Overseas Schools, Rm. 234, SA-6, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520, Tel: 703-235-9600)*. The Department of State will provide information on the basic philosophy of their elementary and secondary schools as well as a general overview on student enrollment, curriculum, faculty, facilities, and finances. They will also send fact sheet booklets on each individual school, which are quite informative.

Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDD's - 2461 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, VA 22331 Tel: 202-325-0885), hires ESL / EFL staff in a number of their schools in various parts of the world. Although the clientele is American military, there is a great need to provide special services to children entering the schools speaking a language other than English. Keep in mind that there is a lengthy application process to undergo. Further, your salary is subject to U.S. taxes since military bases are considered U.S. soil. Despite these drawbacks many teachers have rewarding experiences working with *DoDD's* schools.

ARAMCO or the Arabian American Oil Company (Foreign Service Employment, 1100 Milam, Houston, TX 77002), continues to place qualified teachers in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In addition, this is the only company in Saudi that hires single women teachers. *ARAMCO* has an extensive school system throughout the kingdom and the schools and residences are within the walls of self-sufficient communities and compounds. There are other districts that employ stateside teachers in Saudi Arabia (the names and addresses are available from the U.S. Department of State listed above), however, *ARAMCO's* salary and benefits are the best in the world.

ISS (International Schools Services, P.O. Box 5910, Princeton, N.J. 08543), is actually an employment agency that places American teachers in international jobs. However, *ISS* also operates schools in different parts of the world.

There are a number of religious-affiliated schools throughout the world. Check with local chapters for names and locations of these schools.

Non-accredited schools also operate, in some cases in the same cities as accredited schools (Names and addresses are also available from the Department of State). Generally, these schools are of poorer quality overall since their hiring practices are not controlled by accreditation boards. Keep in mind that the salaries and benefits are also distinct from their accredited counterparts, and that upon returning to the United States, U.S. school districts

may not recognize previous experience at non-accredited schools.

Finally, other opportunities exist in *International Exchange Programs*, such as Fulbright-Hays, the *Peace Corp* and *Multinational Programs*. A more comprehensive list of names, addresses, and phone numbers follows at the end of this paper.

Recruitment

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI), (*Overseas Placement Service for Educators*, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0390), sponsors an annual recruiting fair in February. UNI's fair has a reputation for being very well-organized and provides prospective candidates with an opportunity to interview with representatives from more than 60 international schools. Typically more than one third of the applicants finds jobs at the fair. There is a flat fee of \$60 or \$100 for teaching couples, which is very reasonable for the service that is provided.

In addition UNI prepares periodic vacancy newsletters for all registrants (\$35 if not registered), December through August. A fact sheet book is published annually and mailed to all registrants prior to the fair. This publication provides detailed information on each school registered to attend, as well as those utilizing the vacancy listing service.

A candidate credential file can be actively maintained for five years. For \$2 per request, copies of files may be mailed to schools of the registrant's choice.

The alternative to the non-profit organizations' fairs and services, regular employment agencies are available. ISS, as mentioned earlier, charges a \$50 registration fee and \$600 placement fee. A job vacancy listing is also published. Unfortunately, ISS maintains a poor reputation in terms of organization and operation of its job fair.

National Teacher Placement Bureaus of America [formerly known as TORC], (P.O. Box 09027, 4190 Pearl Rd., Cleveland, OH 44109, Tel: 216-741-3771), is another such agency. The registration and placement fees amount to six and a half percent of the first year's salary. National Teacher operates a number of recruiting sessions throughout the year.

The following is a listing of other fairs and agencies, both profit and non-profit:

- Director, Educational Career Services, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024, Tel: 213-825-2981 ext. 240
- International School, Inc., P.O. Box 1317, Oakland, CA 94661
- Overseas School Services (OSS), 446 Louise St., Farmville, VA 23901, Tel: 804-392-6445
- (Non-profit) Exec. Dir., AAIE, 200 Norman Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611, Tel: 904-392-1542
- Exec. Dir., Association of American Schools in South America, Inc., FIU - Bay Vista Campus, Biscayne Blvd. at 151 St., N. Miami, FL 33181
- Field Services, Edinboro University, Edinboro, PA 16444, Tel: 814-732-2804 or 814-734-7280
- (Non-profit) Educational Career Services, Ohio State University, 110 Arps Hall, 1945 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43220, Tel: 614-422-2741
- The International Educator's Institute, P.O. Box 103, West Bridgewater, MA 02379

Timeline Calendar - Preparing for the Job Search

July - August

- **Update your resume.** Keep it as short and concise as possible. Include your educational objective.
- **Compose a statement** (one-two paragraphs) **of your educational philosophy.** Include your experiences which demonstrate your expertise, your strengths, your ability to interact effectively, and your ability to adapt to new situations - your flexibility. All international educators look for flexibility.
- **Set up a placement file** at the university where you received your last degree.
- **Write to UNI** and others to obtain names and addresses of international schools.

September - October

- **Select the schools** based on your desire to live and travel in a particular area, or areas of the world. (Keep an open mind. Information regarding salary, benefits, living conditions, travel benefits, etc., will influence your decision-making at a later date.)
- **Contact these schools** by mail, expressing your interest. Include a brief cover letter and copy of your resume.

November - December - January

- **Complete** and forward to schools any **applications** received by mail from earlier correspondence.

February - March

- **Interview** throughout the United States. (If attending a recruiting fair, be assertive and persistent in requesting interviews! Nothing happens without the all-important interview. Also, international schools can, and do, discriminate on the bases of sex, race, and marital status. For example, some will only employ married teaching couples; many look for men in the primary grades.)

March - April

- **Follow up** all interviews with a letter restating your interest and thanking the interviewers for their courtesy, etc.
- **WAIT AND HOPE!**

April - May - June

- (If selected) Immediately, upon accepting the job, **renew / apply** for passports.
- Carefully follow the school's instructions as to how to **obtain** your **work visa**. It can, and many times is, an incredibly lengthy process.
- **Prepare** your personal effects **for departure** in July or August!

***QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN APPLYING / INTERVIEWING FOR INTERNATIONAL JOBS:**

About the School:

1. How big is the school and what physical facilities are available?
2. What is the student/teacher ratio of the school?
3. Who publishes the major texts in your subject/grade area?
4. How long is the school day and are after-school activities provided?
5. What standardized tests are administered?
6. What nationalities are represented in the student body and what are the percentages of each?
7. Is there an English proficiency requirement for non-native speakers?
8. Are foreign languages (other than English) part of the curriculum?
9. Are there resource people to help with "exceptional" students?
10. Is there a library? Are there small book collections in each room?
11. What type of curriculum is followed?
12. Are the teachers in a union or association?
13. What occupations brought the parents to this country?
14. What is the basic philosophy of learning and teaching?

On the Country and Life in General:

1. What is the native language? What will I need to survive at first?
2. What are the climate and terrain like?
3. How much social life is available for single and married people?
Is one better than the other?
4. How accessible is the locale and is travel easy?
5. How would you describe personal security? How secure are your home and possessions?
6. Are there shortages of necessities that are just not available?
7. What are the local health problems and how good is health care?
8. Are there housing advantages or problems?
9. How stable is the local currency? The local government?
10. What vaccinations, if any, are necessary?
11. Are visas, entry permits and residence/work papers necessary?
Who is responsible?

About your contract:

1. What currency is the salary paid in? Are there restrictions on international transfer of funds?
2. Is the salary taxed anywhere? What percentage?
Are there exemptions?
3. Is housing provided? Furnished? With what? If it is individual responsibility, will the school assist in locating housing?
What is the local definition of "furnished"? What is the average cost of a - bedroom flat?
4. Is health care international, regional or local?
5. When, and if, are travel and moving allowances provided?
Are there limitations on these benefits due to length of service?
6. Is there a policy for emergency leave or medical leave? Is there any employer assistance with travel in these cases?
7. What benefits are available for dependents?
8. Is there a retirement fund like TIAA/CREF?
9. What are the provisions for contract renewal and are there any bonuses or extra benefits?
10. What country's laws govern the terms of the contract
(U.S. or local) and does it include an exact job description?
11. Can I live on the salary? Savings, etc.

* from the Ohio State University Educational Career Services Department

***Overseas Employment Information for Teachers**

International Educational Exchange Program (Fulbright-Hays Act)

Teaching in elementary and secondary schools:

Division of Human Resource Management
Department of Education

415 12th Street, NW, Room 706

Washington, D.C. 20004 202-724-4080

University lecturing and advance research:

Committee on Inter'l Exchange of Scholars

11 Dupont Circle, Suite 300

Washington, D.C. 20036 202-939-5401

Teaching assistantships and fellowships for study and research:

Institute of International Education

1400 K Street, NW, Suite 650

Washington, D.C. 20005 202-898-0600

Institute of International Education

809 United Nations Plaza

New York, New York 10017 202-883-8200

The Register for Inter'l Service in Education

Institute of International Education

809 United Nations Plaza

New York, New York 10017 212-984-5344

United States Information Agency - Teachers of English as a foreign language, directors of courses and administrators in bi-national centers:

English Teaching Fellowship Program

English Teaching Division (ECAICE)

Recruitment and Source Development Staff

Office of Personnel and Training

United States Information Agency

301 Fourth Street, SW

Washington, D.C. 20547 202-485-2629

Peace Corps - Teaching in elementary, secondary, normal, vocational schools and universities. (No teaching experience required):

Peace Corps Recruiting Office

Attn: Margaret Holmes, Area Manager

633 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 600

Washington, D.C. 20004 202-376-2550

Exchange Programs -

Eight-week teacher exchange programs - USSR/
Latin Amer / East Asia:

AFS Inter'l Intercultural Programs

313 East 43rd Street

New York, NY 10017 212-949-4242

A clearing house for independent school exchanges:

British American Educational Foundation

351 East 74th Street

New York, NY 10021 212-772-3890

United States Territories, Possessions, and Outlying States

Director of Education, Department of Education

American Samoa:

Pago Pago, AMERICAN SAMOA 96920

Guam:

Assistant Superintendent - Personnel

Department of Education

Government of Guam

Agana, GUAM 96910

Pacific Islands (Micronesia):

Personnel Officer, Office of the High Commissioner

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

Saipan, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950

Puerto Rico:

Secretary of Education, Dept. of Education

Hato Rey, PUERTO RICO 00900

Virgin Islands:

Commissioner of Education, Department of Education

Charlotte Amalie

St. Thomas, VIRGIN ISLANDS

Hawaii:

Superintendent, Department of Education

P.O. Box 2360

Honolulu, HI 96804

Alaska:

Commissioner of Education,

State Department of Education

Juneau, AK 99801

International Corporation Programs:

Exxon Corporation

International Employment and Placement Office

1251 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10020

Gulf Oil Corporation

Overseas Personnel Office

P.O. Box 1166

Pittsburgh, PA 15230

Northrop Aircraft - Saudi Arabia

Manager, English Language Training, Northrop (137)

APO New York 09616

African Universities - Trans Century Corporation

Recruitment Coordinator for Africa

1789 Columbia Road, NW Room 76

Washington, D.C. 20009

Multinational Programs -

Egypt:

American University in Cairo, Personnel Services

866 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

Africa:

Association of African Universities

P.O. Box 5744

Accra, NORTH GHANA

Commonwealth:

The Assistant Secretary (appointments) -

The Association of Commonwealth Universities

36 Fardon Square

London SE11 8EN ENGLAND

Universities in many parts of the world:

Interuniversity Council for Higher Education Overseas

90/91 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0DT

or

Century Corporation

1789 Columbia Road, NW

Washington, D.C. 20009

Latin America (generally advanced degrees only):

Latin American Teaching Fellowships Fletcher School

of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

Medford, MA 02155

Near-Middle East:

Personnel Services, Near East College Association

305 East 45th Street, 23rd Floor

New York, NY 10017

TESOL:

1118 22nd Street, NW, Suite 205

Washington, D.C. 20037

Religious Schools:

United Church Board for World Ministries

Overseas Personnel Office

New York, NY 10027

(Many countries recruit educators through their embassies in Washington, D.C. If you wish to teach in a specific country, you may find it valuable to contact the educational officer of the foreign embassy.

Also, write directly to the **Ministry of Education** in a country in which you might like to teach and ask if they need ESL/EFL teachers.

*Sources drawn from *The United States Department of States*

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